

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Amend claim 3 as follows:

*B1*

3. (Amended) The method of producing crosslinked acrylic moisture absorbing fibers according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the comonomer having the acidic group is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of a compound having a carboxyl group and the salts thereof and a compound having a sulfonic acid group and the salts thereof.

**REMARKS**

The amendment to claim 3 merely corrects an error in translation.

Group I, claims 1-3, the method, is elected with traverse.

The election of species is, also, in all respects, made with traverse as follows. The species of copolymer of acrylonitrile which is elected is the species in which the acidic group of the comonomer is carboxyl. As an ultimate species, should the Examiner require greater specificity, the species in which the comonomer is itaconic acid is elected.

This application is the U.S. national stage of PCT/JP99/05974. This is clear from the application transmittal paper and the declaration. By clerical error, the USPTO did not initially process this application as a U.S. national stage. The

USPTO has been petitioned to correct that error. It is obvious the petition will be granted. Therefore, the application should be examined as a U.S. national stage.

This applies both to the priority document matter and to the restriction/election requirement.

The priority document was filed in the International Bureau and, therefore, the USPTO has received a copy thereof through this channel. In the next Office Action, the Examiner should mark boxes 13) a) 3. of the Office Action Summary.

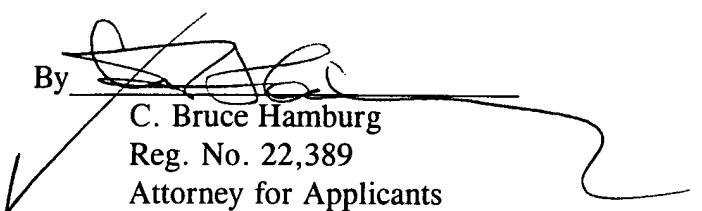
The restriction requirement is traversed on the basis that "unity of invention (not restriction) practice is applicable ... in national stage ... applications." MPEP 1893.03(d) "The basic principle is that ... if there is more than one invention, ... applicant would have a right to include in a single application only those inventions which are so linked as to form a single general inventive concept where there is a technical relationship among the inventions that involves at least one common or corresponding special technical feature ... A process is 'specially adapted' for the manufacture of a product if the claimed process inherently produces the claimed product with the technical relationship being present between the claimed process and the claimed product. The expression 'specially adapted' does not imply that the product could not also be manufactured by a different process." MPEP 1893.03(d). Also see 37 CFR 1.475. Under this standard, it is unequivocal there

is unity of invention between the method claims and product claims of the present application.

As to the election of species, it is submitted that initially searching the invention generically will not add to the examination effort and may, in fact, avoid some subsequent duplication of effort, whereby it would be more efficient that election of species not be required.

Respectfully submitted,

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**APPENDIX I****AMENDED CLAIMS WITH AMENDMENTS INDICATED THEREIN****BY BRACKETS AND UNDERLINING**

3. (Amended) The method of producing crosslinked acrylic moisture absorbing fibers according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the comonomer having the acidic group is at least one [kind of the] compound selected from the group consisting of a compound having a carboxyl group and the salts thereof and a compound having a sulfonic acid group and the salts thereof.